

## FEEDING YOUR THREE YEAR OLD

### Three year olds are busy.

They have their own ideas about food and eating. They need you to set limits on what they can and cannot do. At the same time, you need to be flexible. It's not an easy job!

### Three year olds are growing slowly.

They may not need as much food as you think they do. They may be picky eaters or refuse to eat. This is very normal at this age.

### Your Job And Your Child's Job

Sometimes it helps to remember what your job is and what your child's job is when it comes to eating.

- ✓ **Your job** is to give your child a good variety of healthy foods at regular meals and snacks. Limit junk foods like candy, chips and soft drinks.
- ✓ **Your child's job** is to decide what to eat and how much to eat.

Your child's appetite will change from day to day and this may worry you. But just make sure you are giving the right foods for your child to choose from. Don't force your child to eat.

## Helpful Hints

- ✓ **Meat** usually takes chewing. Three year olds don't really like to chew. Cut meat in small pieces. Mix it with other foods. Chicken, turkey, beans, eggs or cheese are usually easy to chew.
- ✓ **Peanut butter** is a good food instead of meat. Mix it with a little water or milk to make it easier to eat.
- ✓ **Choking** can be dangerous. Make your child sit down to eat. Don't give hard, round foods like hard candy, popcorn or grapes. Cut round foods into small pieces.
- ✓ **"Food jags"** are when a child wants the same food over and over again. If it is healthy food, don't worry. This stage will pass.
- ✓ **Milk** is important. If your child just wants to drink and not eat, give milk after the meal or as a snack.

### How Much Food For A Three Year Old?

A serving of milk, yogurt, juice or ready-to-eat cereal is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup. A serving of cheese or bread is 1 slice. For other foods, start with a serving size of about three tablespoons. Include at least this many servings from the food groups each day:

**Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta:** 6 servings

**Fruit:** 2 servings

**Vegetable:** 3 servings

**Milk, Yogurt and Cheese:** 4 servings

**Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans and Eggs:** 2 servings

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